

COMDTINST 1750.4C

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1750.4C

Sub: OMBUDSMAN

Ref: (a) Ombudsman Handbook, COMDTPUB P1750.13 (series)  
(b) CG Postal Manual, COMDTINST M5110.1 (SERIES)  
(c) Invitational Travel, COMDTINST 12570.3 (series)  
(d) Family Advocacy Program, COMDTINST 1750.7 (series)

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction provides policy and program guidance applicable to all Coast Guard units for the Ombudsman Program.
2. ACTION. Area and district commanders, commanders of maintenance and logistics commands, commanding officers of headquarters units, assistant commandants for directorates, Chief Counsel, and special staff offices at Headquarters shall ensure compliance with this directive.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. COMDTINST 1750.4B is canceled.
4. DESIGNATIONS.
  - a. Commandant will appoint in writing an Ombudsman-at-Large to represent all unit ombudsmen and report on active duty and Reserve family concerns. The Ombudsman-at-Large shall write reports of any field visit and provide them to the Commandant.
  - b. Work-Life Supervisors at Integrated Support Commands (ISC's) and Headquarters Support Command (HSC) shall be the Ombudsman Coordinator. The Work-Life Supervisor may delegate this responsibility in writing to a volunteer or Work-Life Staff specialist. The Ombudsman

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NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION: CG-6; B:c Fifth District (50); C:e New Orleans (15); D:d New Orleans (7);  
D:d New Orleans (7); D:l Pearl Harbor (3); E:a San Diego (6) E:b Miami (30)

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Coordinator trains, informs, and supports ombudsmen within the ISC/HSC area of responsibility.

- c. Commanding officers shall appoint an Ombudsman. an Ombudsman. Officers-in-Charge (OINC) shall either appoint one or ensure family members have access to one appointed for the geographic area. If possible, appoint someone other than commanding officers', officers'-in-charge, executive officers', or executive petty officers' spouses as Ombudsman. The Ombudsman Coordinator, or Command Master Chief may be contacted for assistance in selecting an Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is a volunteer. A spouse, Reservist, or Auxiliarist may serve as Ombudsman.
5. SELECTION CRITERIA FOR OMBUDSMEN. In selecting an Ombudsman the command shall seek a person who has most, if not all, of these traits.
- a. Views life in general and the Coast Guard in particular positively;
  - b. Understands and supports command policies;
  - c. Can articulate family members' concerns and serve as their advocate;
  - d. Is familiar with Coast Guard missions, organizations, and traditions;
  - e. Works effectively with the command and active duty and Reserve officers' and enlisted members' families;
  - f. Has the time to fulfill the responsibilities;
  - g. Can distinguish between issues suitable for public discussion and those requiring confidentiality; discreet;
  - h. Has no record of family violence; and
  - i. Can impartially direct persons with family concerns to appropriate resources.
6. APPOINTMENT PROCESS. Commanding officers and those officers-in-charge who appoint an Ombudsman shall:
- a. In soliciting volunteers for Ombudsman positions pursuant to Paragraph 4.c.:
    - (1) Request a brief resume from all candidates. Enclosure (1) provides guidance.

- (2) Interview candidates to determine the best-qualified person. Enclosure (2) contains sample questions.
  - (3) Appoint an Ombudsman in writing, outlining responsibilities, the appointment's anticipated duration, and available administrative and financial support. Enclosure (3) contains a sample appointment letter.
  - (4) Send a copy of the appointment letter to the Ombudsman Coordinator at the servicing ISC/HSC.
  - (5) If an Ombudsman is to serve more than one command, each command's commanding officer or officer-in-charge shall sign the appointment letter.
  - b. Assure the command and Ombudsman clearly agree on responsibilities, especially those requiring financial expenditures. Ombudsmen should not incur personal expenses in performing these duties.
  - c. Include the Ombudsman position on unit organizational charts. The Ombudsman reports directly to the commanding officer or officer-in-charge of the appointing command.
  - d. Submit a completed Standard Form 52 to the servicing Command Staff Advisor to cover the Ombudsman under Workers Compensation and the Tort Claims Act while acting officially.
  - e. Notify the Ombudsman Coordinator of an Ombudsman's appointment or relief. Give the Ombudsman Coordinator copies of Enclosures (3), (4), and/or (5) as appropriate. The Ombudsman Coordinator will arrange training for newly appointed ombudsmen.
  - f. To preserve the program's integrity, relieve the Ombudsman if he or she no longer meets Paragraph 5 criteria. Enclosure (4) is a sample release letter.
7. UNIT SUPPORT. Consistent with local needs, commanding officers and those officers-in-charge who appoint an Ombudsman shall supply that person and the Ombudsman Coordinator, if a volunteer, with available unit resources from both appropriated and non-appropriated funds (Morale, Well-Being, and Recreation). Commands shall:

- a. Give the Ombudsman a copy of this Commandant Instruction, reference (a), and relevant publications, such as *Coast Guard*, *Hi-Line*, and *The Reservist*. Obtain reference (a) by faxing a request to the DOT Distribution Center at (301) 386-5394.
- b. Give the Ombudsman a list of unit personnel, family members' names, addresses, and telephone numbers. Under Privacy Act guidelines, ombudsmen are designated as "routine users," which grants them access to members'

home addresses and phone numbers for the purpose of providing Work-Life information.

- c. Provide the Ombudsman with a Coast Guard name tag that includes the unit's name and an Ombudsman's pin available from the Work-Life staff.
- d. Ensure the Ombudsman has a telephone answering machine. Buy one if needed for his or her use with appropriated funds and document the property loan on DD 1149. Ombudsmen must use items purchased from appropriated funds to carry out official duties; such items remain Coast Guard property. See Paragraph See 7.f.(3) below.
- e. Permit the Ombudsman to ride as a passenger in Government vehicles.
- f. Authorize appropriated funds for this additional support:
  - (1) Mailing materials to members' homes on the Ombudsman's behalf, including metered mail as described in reference (b).
  - (2) Using administrative equipment, paper, and office supplies as needed, including a typewriter, computer, copy machine, fax machine, telephone with long distance access, government-issued telephone credit card, and letterhead stationery to communicate with families and community resource agencies.
  - (3) Procuring ordinary work-related items such as briefcases, portfolios, and carrying files as Coast Guard property for the Ombudsman's use; he or she must return them to the command on relinquishing duties.

- (4) Invitational travel orders for conducting Ombudsman duties; reference (c) applies.
- g. Reimburse the Ombudsman from either appropriated or non-appropriated funds for these incidental expenses incurred while carrying out official responsibilities:
- (1) Child Care. Reimbursement may not exceed local child development centers' rates.
  - (2) Mileage. Reimburse at the government privately owned vehicle (POV) rate. The Ombudsman must document mileage in a log or journal to claim reimbursement.
  - (3) Parking and Tolls. Reimburse parking and tolls on presentation of receipts.
  - (4) Telephone Calls. Options include:
    - (a) Authorizing FTS 2000 Network telephone use in the unit office, which is preferable if travel from the Ombudsman's residence to an FTS 2000 Network telephone is within a reasonable distance. A log shall be maintained of calls made including person called, purpose, date and time. This shall be presented monthly for review and verification;
    - (b) Purchasing with command funds a telephone credit card in the Ombudsman's name for official calls. Calls shall be documented in the telephone log that include the person called, purpose, date and time. This shall be submitted to the command monthly for review and verification. Use of Federal calling cards (FTS cards) is no longer authorized for use by Ombudsmen.
    - (c) A command may reimburse toll calls on presentation of a telephone company bill. The Ombudsman shall keep a telephone log of all toll calls, including the persons called, purpose, time, and date of such calls. This log shall be submitted for reimbursement; and
    - (d) If a command's members' residences are disbursed over a wide geographic area, causing numerous toll calls, the command may obtain and fund a toll-free (800, 888, or other) number so the commanding officer, officer-in-charge, and

families can leave messages during a deployment or for the Ombudsman.

- h. Recognize the Ombudsman's service through appropriate awards and other forms of recognition, e.g., write a Letter of Appreciation, nominate the Ombudsman for a national volunteer award, or give a Certificate of Performance or other Public Service Award. Observe Coast Guard Ombudsman Appreciation Day, the last Friday in March, with special recognition for the Ombudsman. Commands preferring to give their Ombudsman a token of appreciation should refer to Paragraph 7.f.(3) above.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. The Ombudsman Coordinator shall:

- (1) Serve as the point of contact for unit ombudsmen within the area of responsibility, including providing support, advice, information, and referral;
- (2) Maintain current ombudsmen's appointment letter file;
- (3) Maintain each Ombudsman's current address, phone and fax numbers, and E-mail address; see enclosure (5);
- (4) Identify appropriate training opportunities and arrange all new ombudsmen's initial training; and
- (5) Annually by 30 October send a current list of all ombudsmen in the AOR to Commandant (G-WKW-2).

b. The Ombudsman shall:

- (1) Report directly to the commanding officer or OINC;
- (2) Through periodic meetings, mailings, and articles in command publications, inform family members on the command's behalf;
- (3) Meet with the command regularly to obtain information on concerns common to unit families;
- (4) Refer families to appropriate sources of assistance in resolving family-related questions. The

Ombudsman's role is not to solve other people's problems but to link them to resources that will provide the needed assistance. Confidentiality is important in building trust between the command and its families, who must regard ombudsmen as a reliable source of information and trustworthy source of help in an emergency;

- (5) Support the Work-Life staff's family-oriented initiatives;
- (6) Maintain and keep current local resource files and turn over to a successor;
- (7) If needed, maintain a telephone tree to quickly communicate with families;
- (8) Immediately report suspected or substantiated cases of family violence and any pertinent information to the commanding officer or officer-in-charge and Family Program Administrator (FPA) as described in reference (b). If unable to reach any of these persons contact the Work-Life Supervisor. The Ombudsman shall neither offer counsel nor investigate further. The Work-Life Family Program Administrator is a professional who case-manages incidents of family violence and informs the command. The Ombudsman has no further role in the case and should not expect or receive any feedback because of

confidentiality issues. The Ombudsman shall inform family members of the requirement to report family violence;

- (9) Secure written records of incoming and outgoing telephone calls and requests for resources pertaining to Ombudsman duties where others cannot read them; and
  - (10) Keep expense logs and receipts for reimbursement. Submit copies of all telephone logs to the command for review and verification.
9. Reporting Requirements. Annually on 30 September all commands having an Ombudsman shall validate information contained in enclosure (5) and provide updated information to the Ombudsman Coordinator. The command shall retain signed copies of enclosure (5).

Encl: (1) Sample Application for Ombudsmen  
      (2) Sample Questions for Interviewing Ombudsman  
          Candidates  
      (3) Appointment Letter  
      (4) Termination Letter  
      (5) Release of Information  
      (6) Best Practices for Unit Ombudsman Program